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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the status of the Profile of School Excellence (PRO-S/E) after three years use and the results of a second validation study. The PRO-S/E, used in over 20 school districts in six states, is a diagnostic system school districts use to determine strengths and weaknesses based on 11 characteristics of effective schools. Data is collected by PRO-S/E administrators using: (1) district data forms; (2) superintendent interviews; (3) school data forms; (4) principal interviews; (5) school rating forms; (6) teacher questionnaires; (7) student questionnaires; and (8) optional forms to study schools' achievement test scores and students' socioeconomic status. Data from the school rating form and the teacher and student questionnaires develop graphic comparison profiles for the 11 characteristics. Analyzed results are used in addition to the interview and descriptive information to develop a written comprehensive profile of the school district. The validation study resulted in the broadening of the definition of one variable category, "Roles and Responsibilities"; the reassignment to other variable categories of three items for both the student and teacher survey; and the rewarding of five items in the student survey and five items in the teacher survey. (PN)

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A System for Measuring School Effectiveness: The PRO-S/E

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Background and Introduction

As described in an earlier paper (Sanders, Shively, and Machesney, 1982), the Profile of School Excellence (PRO-S/E) is a diagnostic tool keyed to 11 instructional and organizational variables research has shown to be positively related to effective schools and which are alterable. The PRO-S/E operationally defines the 11 variables as follows:

1. Needs Basis: The extent to which school personnel use an in-place system for identifying, teaching, evaluating, and remediating student learning needs.

2. Objectives: The degree to which school personnel prescribe and communicate to students relevant and attainable objectives for each academic course.

3. Expectations: The degree to which school personnel communicate clearly to each student the belief (the expectation) that each can and will succeed in attaining prescribed academic objectives.

4. Roles & Responsibilities: The degree to which school personnel roles are defined and understood and the degree to which school personnel prepare each student to assume an appropriate level of responsibility for learning, to cooperate with others, and to participate in a broad range of academic and non-academic activities.

5. Conditions & Resources: The degree to which school personnel provide students exemplary conditions of learning--that is, grouping students appropriately; presenting and modeling information and skills in an interactive way that properly motivates students; and using excellent instructional materials to assure maximum student participation and success.

6. Instructional Time & Task Orientation: The degree to which school personnel provide students maximum instructional time during class periods and assure that students attend to and successfully engage in appropriate academic tasks during class time.

7. Use of Assessment: The degree to which school personnel use assessment data as the basis for informing students of their academic progress and informing teachers of their students' remediation needs.

8. Rewards & Reinforcement: The degree to which school personnel use an in-place system of reinforcement that recognizes the accomplishments and achievements of student and staff.

9. Code of Behavior: The degree to which school personnel communicate clearly and enforce equitably rules, structure, routines, and consequences governing student behavior.

10. School Climate: The degree to which school personnel create and model a collegial environment in which students receive and return to those around them a sense of caring, personal concern, interest, respect, commitment, and support for persons, property, and ideas.

11. Parental Support & Involvement: The degree to which school personnel have established procedures that encourage meaningful parental and community interest, involvement, and support in students' academic progress.

The earlier paper defined effective or excellent schools as most likely to be found in school districts exhibiting four factors:

1. Achievement data show that students are learning what they are supposed to learn and that their socioeconomic status cannot be used to predict their achievement level.

2. Attendance data show that students and parents value instruction and are comfortable with the climate of the schools.

3. Incidences of delinquency and vandalism are relatively low.

4. Survey data show that the district gets high grades--high satisfaction ratings--from students, staff, board members, parents, and citizens.

The purpose of this paper is to report the status of the PRO-S/E after three full years of use and a second validation study. The former taught that PRO-S/E interviews are more productive if the superintendents and principals being interviewed fill out the interview protocol individually, before the face-to-face interview. Experience also proved that data arrays communicate PRO-S/E reports better than narrative. These learnings have resulted in a streamlining of the interview and PRO-S/E report preparation process.

The latter, the validation study, involved researchers sorting the items used in the PRO-S/E surveys into the 11 variable categories the items purport to measure. The researchers used in this study were faculty members at the University of Virginia who are knowledgeable of the school effectiveness literature. This study resulted in the broadening of the definition of one variable category, "Roles & Responsibilities"; the

reassignment to other variable categories of 3/74 student survey items; the reassignment to other variable categories of 3/82 teacher survey items; and the rewording of five items in the student survey and five items in the teacher survey.

Current Status of the PRO-S/E

The PRO-S/E remains a diagnostic system school districts use to determine strengths and weaknesses based on 11 characteristics of effective schools.

Data collection is conducted by PRO-S/E administrators using seven required and one optional instruments:

1. District Data Form: Used to collect data from the superintendent on the district's educational philosophy, description of the schools in the district, results of any district surveys conducted, district budget, rank in state relative to per-pupil expenditure, percent of graduates attending postsecondary institutions, standardized test results, and community information.

2. Superintendent Interview: Used to collect data from the superintendent on his/her professional background, perceptions of the greatest local educational needs, programs for improving students' basic skills, communication of expectations, encouragement of staff professional initiative, evidence of district successes, communication of standards/code of conduct, teachers' perceptions of professional development, staff roles and goals, staff hiring and orientation procedures, monitoring/evaluation of principals, use of research, perceptions of school climate, perceptions of community/parental involvement, and most serious problems to be faced by the superintendent and principals during the next five years.

3. School Data Form: Used to collect data about each school on enrollment statistics for past three years; average daily attendance; pupil/teacher ratio; current innovative programs; any recent survey results; student follow-up information; newsletters; policy statements on communication of achievement data, use of achievement data by teachers and counselors, and school educational philosophy including teacher code and student code; and, if a secondary school, a listing of courses available.

4. Principal Interview: Used to collect data from each school principal on his/her professional background; school academic goals and communication of goals to faculty, students, and parents; perceptions of effectiveness of basic skills achievement programs; encouragement

of staff initiative; use of fiscal resources; attendance policies; procedures for monitoring instructional time and academic progress; recognition of student academic achievement; rules of classroom behavior; staff roles; evaluation of teachers; perceptions of school climate; encouragement of parental and community support; and problems principals will face in the next five years.

5. School Rating Form: Used by central office staff to rate each school on the 11 PRO-S/E characteristics.

6. Teacher Questionnaire: A 50 percent sample of nonitinerant teachers from each school is selected at random to complete a questionnaire that measures perceptions of district and school status on the 11 PRO-S/E characteristics.

7. Student Questionnaire: A 10 percent sample of students from grades 6-12 from each school is selected at random to complete a questionnaire that measures perceptions of status on the 11 PRO-S/E characteristics.

8. Optional: There is an eighth instrument used to conduct a study of the schools' achievement test scores and students' socioeconomic status. Sometimes school districts have such studies on file, sometimes not. This study accepts Ron Edmonds' finding that in effective schools standardized test scores indicate that learning opportunities and achievement are similar for students from various backgrounds and SES.

All of the above data collection is conducted by staff of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) or trained AEL associates. The data from the Teacher Questionnaire and the Student Questionnaire are collected using mark-sense cards that are read by an electronic reader.

Data Analysis

Data from the School Rating Form, the Teacher Questionnaire, and the Student Questionnaire are used to develop graphic comparison profiles for the 11 characteristics. Analyses of these data and of the optional achievement SES substudy data are conducted using a microcomputer and software developed by AEL. These results are used in addition to the interview and descriptive information to develop a comprehensive profile of the school district and the district's schools regarding the 11 characteristics.

Report

A written report is presented to the superintendent that includes the following:

1. Background and purpose of the PRO-S/E.
2. Results by school on the 11 characteristics.
3. Results by the 11 characteristics including summary statements for elementary schools, summary statements for middle schools, summary statements for high schools, and recommendations.
4. Overview of the four school effectiveness variables.
5. Results of the achievement/SES study by school and summarized.

District Followup

After the presentation of the written report, PRO-S/E administrators contact the district superintendent to answer questions about the results and to determine if further services can be used to remediate any of the problem areas identified by the PRO-S/E process.

Users

The PRO-S/E has been used in more than 20 school districts in six states, covering a wide range of district sizes. Adopting sites include Frankfort Independent Schools (KY), Boyd County Schools (KY), Lockland City Schools (OH), Gilmer County Schools (WV), Pulaski County Schools (VA), Knoxville City Schools (TN), and Washington Public Schools (PA).

Future Directions

School districts continue to express interest in the PRO-S/E. As a result, the developers have completed and pilot tested a PRO-S/E Training Manual which is provided as part of an eight-hour PRO-S/E training workshop to professors and consultants who work closely with local school

districts and are experienced hands at facilitating R & D-based school improvement projects. The workshop has been through both pilot and field testing and will be available from AEL by spring 1986.

PRO-S/E instrumentation will be both expanded and streamlined. Expansion will include special adaptations of the current student survey so that it may be administered to students in grades one to four--current instrumentation is effective with students reading at grade five and above. Expansion will include also improvements in the PRO-S/E rating form used by district central office staff. Streamlining will include printing the surveys on mark-sense score sheets for faster machine reading. It will also include use of a more powerful microcomputer than the one presently being used.

Finally, the authors look forward to studying improvement trends among school districts which implement PRO-S/E studies. Such studies should consider questions about the kinds of changes PRO-S/E districts make--are they structured or cosmetic? Are urban school efforts similar from district to district? Are they different substantively from those of schools in small/rural districts? Do PRO-S/E districts that implement improvement plans show improvement on a second PRO-S/E study? What are the different ways that districts and principals use PRO-S/E report data to improve schools?

Reference: School Effectiveness: Profile of School Excellence, by Jack Sanders, Joe E. Shively, and J. Douglas Machesney. A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1984.